

*Sister Cecelia Marie Scaduto*

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Sister Cecelia Marie Scaduto and I am writing to ask you to vote **NO** to the physician assisted suicide bill HB 5326 – An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Patient. As a healthcare professional and director of an adult day care center with more than 20 years of experience, I care for the sick elderly. What the sick and dying need is authentic love, service and “true compassion,” not an act that will help them take their own lives. When people are sick and dying they need our love and support, not to be “put down” like our sick cats or dogs. In Oregon, where euthanasia has been legal since 1997, statistics show that patients request physician assisted suicide not because they have intractable pain; they request to be put to death because of their loss of autonomy, decreased ability to partake in enjoyable activities and fear of losing their dignity.

Every day I work with elderly clients and their families who are burdened with the diseases and sicknesses that affect the elderly. Their burden is lightened once they experience the love, support and compassion from healthcare professionals who serve them. I have heard many times from the sick and dying, who lack or perceive a lack of love, service and compassion, talk about wanting to die. I have also witnessed that these same persons have a completely different viewpoint on life once they experience love and compassion. It is difficult for a person who once has enjoyed autonomy to have to ask for assistance in the basic activities of daily living. What we need to do is assist them in a dignified manner so that they don't feel like they are a burden on their family, friends and society.

Compassion means “to suffer together with another.” Compassion is helping to bear the burden of another's pain and suffering- to take their pain on our own shoulders. This is done by serving the sick and dying with charity, empathy and kindness. Can caring for the sick and dying be inconvenient? Yes! Can caring for the sick and dying wrench our hearts? Yes! But it can also be a beautiful time of giving of ourselves to our loved ones or neighbors in need. Compassion in dying is about relationship- it's about being with and loving another in need as they approach the end of their natural life.

Please say “**no**” to HB 5326 and say yes to love, service and “true compassion” for people with terminal illnesses.

Sincerely,

*Cecelia Marie Scaduto*

Center

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of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

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